



Strengthening SOAR with Peer Supports: Roundtable Discussion

*What are peers doing with SOAR in Michigan?
Learn how peers can be part of the SOAR team in
your agency.*

PRESENTED BY:

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, POPULATION
HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, HOUSING AND
HOMELESS SERVICES DIVISION

Welcome!

Wayne Kennerly, PATH/SOAR Liaison, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Population Health and Community Services Administration, Housing and Homeless Services Division

Agenda

Peers/Consumer-Run Organizations: An Overview

- Wayne Kennerly, *PATH/SOAR Liaison, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Population Health and Community Services Administration, Housing and Homeless Services Division*

Agenda

Perspectives of Peer Support Specialists on SOAR and Recovery

- Renee Blaze Certified Peer Support Specialist, Washtenaw County Mental Health, Ann Arbor
- John Mills, Certified Peer Support Specialist and SOAR Specialist, Allegan County Community Mental Health, Allegan
- Ben Busfield, Certified Peer Support Specialist/PSH and Mental Health Treatment Court (MHTC) Case Manager , Allegan County Community Mental Health, Allegan

Questions & Answers, SOAR Technical Assistance Center

<http://soarworks.prainc.com/>

Peers and SOAR: How People with Lived Experience Can Make Your Program SOAR Higher!

WAYNE KENNERLY, PATH/SOAR LIAISON, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, POPULATION HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES DIVISION

What Are Peer Services?

Peer services are provided by people in recovery from mental health and or substance use disorders. They provide an opportunity for consumers to assist others in their recovery journeys by supplementing existing treatment/service options by:

- modeling/promoting recovery and hope;
- teaching skills;
- supporting empowerment;
- aiding in system navigation.

Where are Peer Services Used?

- Outpatient settings
- Bridger Programs
- Crisis residences
- Inpatient hospitals
- Forensic settings
- Criminal justice programs
- Street outreach programs
- In SOAR Programs!



Where are We?

- In 2007 CMS in its letter to states indicated that “Peer support services are an evidence-based mental health model of care which consists of a qualified peer support provider who assists individuals with their recovery from mental illness and substance use disorders. CMS recognizes that the experiences of peer support providers, as consumers of mental health and substance use services, can be an important component in a State’s delivery of effective treatment.”
- SAMHSA identifies peer support/consumer operated services as evidence based practices.
- The Institute of Medicine emphasized the importance of peer support and peer delivered services in its landmark report, Improving the Quality of Health Care for Mental and Substance-Use Conditions: Quality Chasm Series.

Why are peer services important?

Peers can be effective in engaging people who are earlier in their recovery and/or who may be hesitant to use traditional services. Research suggests that the deployment of peer staff may be most crucial in the earliest phases of engaging people into care, including people who have substance use disorders and/or a history of criminal justice involvement. Peers are especially useful when working with special populations such as veterans and young adults.



Peers in SOAR

The ADDED Value!

- Aid in engagement
- Show people that recovery is real and POSSIBLE!
- Peer providers have their recoveries strengthened!
- Provide a non-clinical view about a person's strengths and challenges
- Provide an agency with added passion and dedication because they have 'been there'
- Have a hand on the pulse of the local cultural groups

Cost Effective?

Using peers instead of traditional treatment in 2006, the GA Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities compared consumers using certified peer specialists vs. consumers who received the normal services in day treatment (the control group). Consumers using the services of certified peer specialists showed improvement as compared to the control group in each of these areas:

- reduction of current symptoms/behaviors
- increase in skills/abilities
- ability to access resources/meet their own needs



In comparing the cost of services, those using the certified peer specialists cost the state, on average, \$997 versus the average cost of \$6491 in day treatment. Average cost savings of \$5494 per person!

Strategies for Implementation

- Find your “champion” to address issues that arise on a systemic level and to keep the development of peer services a priority for the agency.
- Prepare a clear job description that is fully endorsed by key stakeholders. It should include all relevant competencies and a clear policy for evaluating job performance.
- Involve non-consumer staff and organizational leaders early and throughout the process of creating and filling peer positions.
- Ensure that peer staff reflect the cultural, linguistic, and social diversity of consumers you will be serving. One approach to identifying and recruiting staff that will help ensure a good match is to form collaborative relationships with community-based organizations representing diverse client populations.

Strategies for Implementation

- Identify and value the unique contributions that peers can make to your program. The optimal benefits of hiring peers will not be realized if they are only trained and expected to carry out traditional case-management tasks.
- Start with at least two peer staff to facilitate their transition to this new role. This gives them the opportunity to share job experiences and provide support to each other. Additionally, connect them with other sources of professional support specifically designed for peer workers (see resources section at the end of this PPT).

Strategies for Implementation

- Provide training for peer staff that covers the specific skills and tasks required in their roles, such as using their recovery story to the benefit of the people they work with, listening effectively, creating positive relationships, addressing emergent situations, fulfilling documentation requirements, adhering to ethics and confidentiality rules, setting boundaries, and resolving conflicts in the workplace.
- Provide supervision for peer staff that concentrates on job skills, performance, and support, rather than on the person's clinical status. This establishes expectations of peer staff that are equivalent to the agency's expectations of other employees.

Strategies for Implementation

- Provide training and education for non-peer staff that covers the Americans with Disabilities Act and its implications for hiring and the provision of reasonable accommodations, expectations of peer staff, ethics, boundaries, adopting person-first language and a respectful attitude toward all coworkers.
- Make benefits specialists who are knowledgeable about the various work incentive programs and ways employment may affect a person's benefits available.
- Disseminate success stories that inspire hope and persistence in all parties!

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For More Information on SOAR

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